



BUCHNER'S ACCOUNT OF THE BREITENWINNER CAVE IN 1535

This piece was found at an obscure web site on the Internet. If anyone has further information regarding the 1535 expedition into the Breitenwinner Cave, please let us know.

—Editor

Remarkable tidings from the year 1535! Twenty-five citizens of the town of Amberg set off to a mountainous area three miles distant from Amberg. Near the village of Predenwind they went into a huge hollow mountain, about 900 klafters [1700 m] deep, and walked through to the other side. The marvels they saw there have been written down by Berthold Buchner.

In the evening on the day of St Peter and St Paul, the abovementioned 25 men set off from Amberg with a cart laden with ladders, materials for making fire, stone-breaking tools, ropes, wine, bread, and other items useful for such an undertaking. They went to the market place of Hohenburg to stay overnight. Next day they started very early, meeting at the entrance of the mountain and debated.

The ignorant will not believe this story, the experienced ones will not think it possible. But we have seen it with our own eyes, and it is the truth. —1535.

Two of us were appointed leaders, to whom we others promised obedience, etc. Then we got ready to go into the hole which is so wide that one could turn a wagon of hay in it.

Each of us had to carry something: a piece of rope, a light, lantern, pickaxe, wine, bread, etc. And we sang cheerfully "We are travelling in the name of God!"

One of the leaders went in first, the other leader brought up the rear. He secured the entrance with rope and marked it with signs

to avert danger, because if we should lose track of the ropes it would be impossible for us to get out again. After fastening the ropes to a rock we descended 500 klafters [950 m]. Four honest, strong men were selected to keep watch at the mouth of the mountain cave. Very soon we arrived at a very narrow cleft. One of our companions, a goldsmith who at home had desired to be the first one in the cave, was so frightened by the sight of it that he deserted us. But we crept on our stomachs some fifty



THE TWILIGHT ZONE

klafters [95 m] through this narrow cleft. There was a wider opening next to it but it did not stretch very far. First of all we came upon a wide space like a hall for dancing. When we crept in we found so many bones that the first of us had to pile them up in one place to make room for us to enter. The bones were very large as if from giants.

We then reached a very narrow hole and had to squeeze through on our stomachs. At 200 klafters [380 m] one comes into what seems like a beautiful spacious palace big enough to hold about 100 horses. It is lined at the top very handsomely with "grown" stones [speleothems]. There are eight or ten "grown" pillars and good seats at the sides. Here we found two skulls which, to our surprise, were enclosed by the rock and we could hardly hack them out with our tools. Each person took a piece, one the cranium, one the teeth, etc. There were many passages here and everywhere in the mountain; some of them we explored. All the caves and passages were full of big bones.

We searched for about an hour for a hole leading further in. At last our leader found one and we all followed him. The other tunnels met now and then in the mountain. We were still amazed by the sight of this palace.

After 150 klafters [285 m] we came across a very narrow cave, finding it difficult to squeeze in. There we heard a strange roaring, crackling and rustling. More than one of us wished he had stayed at home with his wife. Suddenly the cave widened so that we could walk side-by-side. We took counsel and decided to go on and find out what these wild sounds were. Our leader went in front again.

Arriving at another wide space, we examined it carefully. It looked like a chapterhouse, with pews on one wall and a gallery overhead. It was difficult to get up there and I stayed down below. In all the caves we found many bones. We came to a narrow vault where we found a skull bigger than we had ever seen before. When we tried to squeeze it through the narrow opening it crumbled like ashes. Through a narrow entrance we got down further, about 200 klafters [380 m]. There was more and more roaring and rustling till we came upon a fairly wide opening where an enormous waterfall was rushing down between two rocks with such a force it would have

been sufficient to turn two mill wheels. The stream ran downwards over the opening. We were curious to know where this stream came from or to find its spring, as it was so icy cold. However we could not follow it. Our leader got stuck there in a cave; he had to be pulled out otherwise he would have died. The same happened to me and I felt very weak afterwards so the apothecary gave me a restorative.

On the other side, between the south and west point, we found a fountain with four stone pillars around it and there seem to have been seats there at one time.

Adjoining this wide cave was a handsome triangular vault. There we found a stone sculpture. It resembled a deity seated on a throne with a straw wreath on its head. The straw was black and very brittle. A few of us took some straw home.

We found another stone sculpture hanging from a high wall. We left a light burning in front of it. At 200 klafters [380 m] we found loose soil with a great many bones.

We crept and walked on, following the rope and at 250 klafters [475 m] we came to a most wonderful palace and tabernacle. On the other side, between the south and west point, we found a fountain with four stone pillars around it and there seem to have been seats there at one time. The fountain was very cold.

We hung our wine bottles in it and the wine was soon cooled.

While we refreshed ourselves at the fountain we heard a loud noise in the cliff where the stream ended. Our leader was bold enough to climb in but got stuck and became drenched. When we came to his rescue with lights, one of us—called Burckstaller—was struck on the head. We thought the object had been thrown by a female figure. Burckstaller was very superstitious, so perhaps it was a ghost. We did not see anything else.

It was very strange that the dripping water, which falls into this mountain in 60 places, freezes into a very hard, even rock and into translucent stone. From some caves, a white salt-like substance trickles out; it looks like glass and we took it to be saltpetre. In a cliff of this rock, one of our companions found a strong, grey, curly hair which he assumed was from a beard. All of us were curious to find out more about the "ghost" and would have faced further adventures and dangers. But we lost the passages and caves where we saw the "ghost" and were forced to climb to the surface with the rope and soon reached daylight again. Just then a cuirassier with two horses passed the entrance of the cave and we called to him to come in. But on seeing us he rode away hurriedly. We all looked discoloured and were terrified at each other's appearance. We looked like corpses and startled the guards at the entrance.

But thanks to God, nobody was hurt. Praise be to God now and for ever. Amen. This has been written down by Berthold Buchner, who took part, and is attested by the Treasurer of Amberg.

(Source: <http://www.gci-net.com/users/v/vrartist/1535caves.html>)

Editor's Note:

The following source information was also posted at the above website: I found this story in *History of Cave Science; The Exploration and Study of Limestone Caves, to 1900* by Trevor R. Shaw, Second Edition Published by the Sydney Speleological Society, 1992. The call letters, here in the University of Arizona Library are: "GB 601 A4 S54 1992 Science" (Science Library). It is interesting that this cave appears to be almost "off limits" in a military training area.

SCIENTISTS OUTRAGED OVER DAMAGE TO "HOBBIT" REMAINS

In what is being called a true case of scientific skullduggery, the remains of a newly discovered human species have suffered irreparable damage since entering the care of palaeontologists.

The damage to the bones of this diminutive being—named *Homo floresiensis* and nicknamed "hobbit" by scientists—is so extensive that it will limit scholarly research on the species, say members of the Indonesian Center for Archaeology-based discovery team.

Considered the most important discovery in human origins in five decades, the remains are marred by broken jaws and smashed bones.

"The equivalent in the world of art would be somebody slashing the Mona Lisa and then trying to fix it with chewing gum," says palaeontologist Tim White of the University of California-Berkeley.

Reported in October's *Nature* magazine by a team of Australian and Indonesian researchers, the discovery of *Homo floresiensis* shocked paleontologists. The beings lived on Flores from at least 94,000 to 13,000 years ago, making them the only human species besides Neanderthals that lived alongside modern man, *Homo sapiens*, in ancient times.

Despite having chimp-sized brains and standing about three feet tall, they hunted pygmy elephants and Komodo dragons using complex stone blades and axes like those wielded by modern humans.

In November, the research took a bizarre turn into the politics of palaeontology. Teuku Jacob of Gadjah Mada University, an Indonesian scientist unaffiliated with the discovery team, took the partly fossilised bones to his lab in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 275 miles away from their repository in Jakarta.

What followed was a standoff that set an older generation of Indonesian and Australian palaeontologists against younger scientists. Jacob, 75, is considered Indonesia's most prominent palaeontologist, a role with added status in a country that reveres age and seniority.

On the other side is the team of scientists based at the Indonesian Center for Archaeology but whose work is funded by the Australian Research Council.

Aside from four leg bones that remain in Jacob's custody, the fossils were returned on 23 February.

The team charges the remains were severely damaged by rubber moulds made at Jacob's lab: "The return of the bones to the Jakarta center is cloaked in mystery", says discovery team member Richard Roberts of Australia's University of Wollongong.

The team believes the government intervened. Palaeoanthropologist Harry Widianto of the Yogyakarta Archaeology Agency was sent to get the bones.

(Source: Sci-Tech Today; March 22, 2005; http://www.sci-tech-today.com/story.xhtml?story_id=31628)

"The return of the bones to the Jakarta center is cloaked in mystery"

INFRA-RED REVEALS AMAZING SECRETS IN ANCIENT PAPYRI

A vast array of previously unintelligible manuscripts from ancient Greece and Rome are being read for the first time thanks to infra-red light, in a breakthrough hailed as the classical equivalent of finding the Holy Grail.

The technique could see the number of accounted-for ancient manuscripts increase by one-fifth and may even lead to the unveiling of some lost Christian gospels.

A team at Oxford University is using the technology to bring back into view faded ink on thousands of papyrus scrolls salvaged from an ancient rubbish dump in the 19th century.

The "multi-spectral imaging process", which is also used in producing images

from satellites, uses infra-red light to reveal ink invisible to the eye.

The collection, taken from the now-disappeared town of Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, has been stored in the Sackler library in Oxford, where it is the largest of its kind in the world.

Material ranges from the third to the seventh centuries BC and includes work by classical writers such as Sophocles, Euripides and Hesiod. Those uncovered so far include parts of the *Epigonoï* (Progeny), a long-lost tragedy by Sophocles, the fifth century BC Greek playwright, and part of a lost novel by Lucian, a second century Greek writer. There is also an epic poem by Archilochos, a 7th century successor of Homer, which describes events leading up to the Trojan War.

"The Oxyrhynchus collection is of unparalleled importance—especially now that it can be read fully and relatively quickly", said Dr Dirk Obbink, who is leading the imaging work. "The material will shed light on virtually every aspect of life in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, and, by extension, the classical world as a whole".

Christopher Pelling, regius professor of Greek at Oxford University, said the works were "central texts which scholars have been speculating about for centuries".

(Source: Sci-Tech Today; April 19, 2005; http://www.sci-tech-today.com/story.xhtml?story_title=Infra-Red-Brings-Ancient-Papyri-to-Light&story_id=33131&category=disc)

